

WHAT IS THE SUZUKI METHOD?

The Suzuki method was created in the 1940s by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, a violinist and educator in Japan. Dr. Suzuki realized that all typical children learn to speak their native language effortlessly. He was inspired to discover whether typical children could learn to play the violin at a very high level, provided the same environmental factors: immersion, good modeling and instruction, and positive reinforcement.

Just as we learn to speak our language before we learn to read and write it, within the Suzuki framework, children learn to play before they learn to read and write musical notation.

This allows the child to focus on developing the ear, which leads to greater awareness of musical nuance and expression, and also attention to proper physical comfort and ease with the instrument.

The Suzuki approach is modeled after language acquisition, and also referred to as “mother tongue method” and “talent education”.

Learning to play an instrument well requires diligent work. Young children cannot be expected to remember exactly what the teacher asks them to practice, nor can they be expected to willingly maintain a daily practice routine.

In the way that a parent guides his/her children to develop good habits such as brushing teeth, eating vegetables and doing homework, parents also guide their children in how to establish a daily practice routine and how to practice efficiently. A practice schedule of at least five days per week is expected, once lessons begin. In the beginning, home practice sessions will be short – five to ten minutes – but will increase as the child learns more. This issue is discussed at length in the Parent Classes.

Additionally, working with a young child requires an appreciation for the mindset of youngsters. Children learn through play. The more we incorporate games and play into the hard work of learning an instrument, the more success a parent and teacher will have with young students.

WHAT IS SUZUKI PARENT EDUCATION?

Suzuki Parent Education is a short series that prepares families for private instrumental Suzuki lessons. Parents (only – without their child) meet with the teacher for three classes prior to starting private Suzuki lessons, that educate parents about the Suzuki philosophy and prepare them for their crucial role in their child’s private lessons. Please note: the parent who will be attending the weekly lesson with the child and serving as the “home teacher” is the parent who needs to attend this series. We welcome both parents, if a two-parent household, but it is imperative that the most involved parent take this series.

WHY IS SUZUKI PARENT EDUCATION REQUIRED?

Because the parents’ role is so important in a child’s Suzuki journey, we have found that the better prepared a parent is the greater likelihood of success for the child. We want each child to persevere with their instrument and for every parent and child to feel successful.

The Suzuki method is not merely another method or approach, but rather, a way to develop children into sensitive and noble human beings. The benefits families gain through successful music study will flow into all other areas of life: homework, healthy eating, sportsmanship, and all disciplines. I want to guide parents to motivate their children to practice without intimidation, bribery and nagging.

“For the good of the method”: when a family isn’t successful using the Suzuki method, the method itself risks being blamed. Much of the bad press the approach has gained in the U.S. results from Suzuki parents who were unsuccessful. Between the student’s lack of ability to play well and a parent’s bad experience, it becomes easy to say Suzuki teachers are bad, or the method doesn’t work.

The onus is on us to prepare families on how to implement an early 20th century Japanese philosophy and method in the 21st American century.

WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE?

Schedule to be posted soon! Please check back.

Here is the outline of the four classes:

Class 1 examines an overview of the Suzuki philosophy, origins of the Suzuki philosophy, how our program works, how to be placed with a Suzuki instructor.>

Classes 2 and 3 focus on how to create and maintain a daily practice and listening schedule, motivate your child when their interest lags, ideas for making practice more child-friendly, taking notes at lessons.

Subsequent parent gatherings are provided for parents to share ideas, tips, successes and frustrations with each other.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PARENT CLASSES AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

Katherine Baird leads discussions on:

- Listening to the Suzuki repertoire: the nucleus of the Suzuki method
- How to create a musical home environment
- Parents’ role at lessons (and how it evolves as the child matures)
- Parents’ role as “home teacher”(and how it evolves as the child matures)
- How to establish and maintain a daily practice and listening routine
- How to make practicing engaging and motivating
- How to respond when your child doesn’t want to practice or says they want to quit

The purpose is to help parents thoroughly understand and feel educated about the Suzuki philosophy, their place in their child’s musical journey, and confident about taking on the role of daily “home teacher” between the private lessons.

IN A TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLD, DO BOTH PARENTS PARTICIPATE, OR ONLY ONE?

Having both parents attend is wonderful, but the parent who will be practicing with the child and attending the weekly private lesson must attend all classes, as he/she is the one for whom the information and learning will be most pertinent.

DO I HAVE TO ATTEND ALL THE CLASSES, AND WHAT HAPPENS IF WE MISS?

Yes. Attendance at all classes is required and there are no make-ups.

We have scheduled this course to be brief so that families can begin lessons as soon as possible. Private lessons cannot begin until the Parent Education portion is completed.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Suzuki Parent Education tuition is \$50